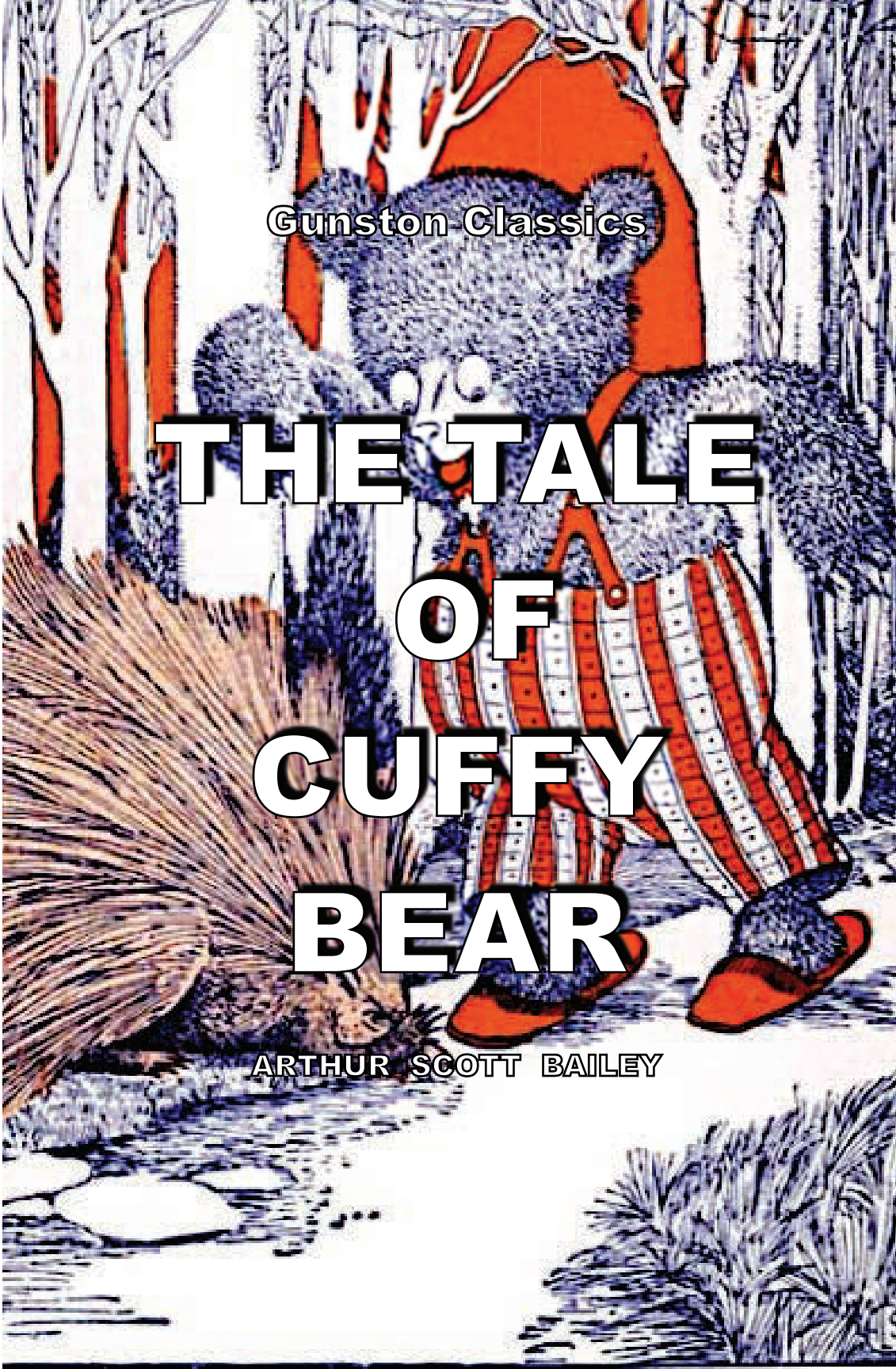

Gunston Classics

THE TALE OF CUFFY BEAR

ARTHUR SCOTT BAILEY

THE TALE OF CUFFY BEAR

by Arthur Scott Bailey
Harry L. Smith - Illustrator
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THE TALE OF CUFFY BEAR

I

CUFFY WAKES UP

Far up on the side of Blue Mountain lived Cuffy Bear with his father and mother and his little sister Silkie. Mr. Bear's house was quite the finest for many miles around. It was what people call a cave, being made entirely of stone, and so there was no danger of its ever catching fire; and since it was built straight into the side of the mountain the roof was so very, very thick that Cuffy's father never had to worry for fear a tree would fall upon his house and hurt his family. No matter how hard the wind blew, Mr. Bear was never afraid of that.

Little Cuffy was not a bad bear at heart. But often when he was playing with Silkie, his sister, he would lose his temper and cuff her on the head and make her cry. Then his father or his mother would cuff *him*. Somehow, he never could learn not to strike out when he became angry. That was why he was called Cuffy. It happened sometimes that a day or two would pass without Cuffy's cuffing his sister. And Mr. Bear and Mrs. Bear would begin to think that at last Cuffy had been cured of his bad habit.

"I do believe the child is growing better mannered," Mrs. Bear would say to her husband, as they watched their son and daughter playing upon the floor. And then just as likely as not, the first thing they knew Cuffy would give Silkie a good, hard box on the ear, or a slap right on the end of her nose.

But for a long time every winter Cuffy was never naughty. You might think that that was just before Christmas. But no—it was not then. All winter long Cuffy was just as good

as any little bear could be. He was good because he was asleep! You see—when cold weather came, Mr. and Mrs. Bear and their children stayed in their cozy house, which was snug and warm, and slept and slept and slept for weeks and weeks until spring came.

Now, this tale begins on the very first day of spring. And on that day Mr. Bear waked up. He rose slowly to his feet, for his bones felt stiff because he had been asleep for such a long time. And he was hungry—oh! very hungry, because he had not eaten anything for months and months, since he went to sleep at the beginning of winter.

He went to the door of his house and looked out. And he saw that the weather was warm and fine. So he stepped back into the bedroom and said—

"*Ou-e-e-ee!*" Just like that. And then Mrs. Bear awaked. "Spring has come," Mr. Bear told her, "and I am going out to fetch something to eat. Wake up Cuffy and Silkie and tell them that it is time to get up."

Gently Mrs. Bear roused Cuffy and Silkie.

"Come, children! Run out and play and get your lungs full of nice, fresh air. Now, be good and don't go far away!" she said.

II

CUFFY BEAR FINDS A PORCUPINE

For a few minutes Cuffy stood in the doorway and blinked and blinked. He rubbed his eyes, for the bright sunlight hurt them. But soon he and Silkie were frisking and tumbling about in the front-yard.

After a little while Cuffy remembered that there was an old tree over in the pine woods —just the finest tree to climb that anybody could want.

"Let's go over to the old tree and play," Cuffy said.

"But Mother told us not to go far away," Silkie reminded him.

"Oh! I don't care," Cuffy said. "Besides, we'll be back before she knows it."

But Silkie would not go with him. So naughty Cuffy started off alone for the pine woods. He found the old tree. It seemed smaller than he expected. The reason for that was because Cuffy himself had grown tall during the months that he had spent in sleep.

He climbed the tree to the very top and as he looked down over the snow he saw something moving a little way off. Whatever it was, it was much smaller than Cuffy himself, so he was not afraid. And he scrambled down to the ground and ran as fast as he could go to the place where he saw the small thing moving. Cuffy wanted to see what it was. He was always like that.

Cuffy found a little animal covered with stiff, sharp quills and he knew that it was a porcupine. And all at once Cuffy felt very

hungry. He remembered that his father had sometimes brought home porcupine meat and—yes, Cuffy actually smacked his lips! His mother was always telling him not to smack his lips, but Cuffy forgot all about it now.

As Cuffy came running up Mr. Porcupine rolled himself into a round ball and lay perfectly still. Now, Cuffy remembered that his father had often told him never to touch a porcupine, because if he should he would get his paws stuck full of quills. But now Cuffy decided that he would show his father that he too was clever enough to kill a porcupine. So he stepped close to the little round, prickly ball and gave it one good, hard cuff.

The next instant Cuffy gave a howl of pain. He was so angry that he struck the porcupine once more with his other front-paw.

Again Cuffy howled! Now both his front-paws were full of quills. They looked just like pincushions. And as Cuffy saw what

Cuffy Gave It One Good, Hard Cuff

had happened he began to cry. He wanted his mother.

So home he started. All the way he had to walk on his hind legs, because it hurt him terribly whenever he put one of his front-paws on the ground.

Cuffy wept very hard when Mrs. Bear pulled out the quills. And his paws were so sore that he could not feed himself. His mother had to put into his mouth bits of the frozen turnips that his father found in Farmer Green's field. And though afterward Cuffy did many things that he ought not to have done, he never, never touched a porcupine again.

III

CUFFY AND THE

WONDERFUL SPRING

The pricks of the porcupine's quills made Cuffy Bear's paws so sore that it was several days before he could run about again. And during all that time Cuffy was a very good little bear. He did not cuff his sister Silkie once. You see, he knew it would hurt his sore paws if he did.

The days were still fine. Cuffy loved to feel the bright sunshine upon his black coat. It warmed him through and through and he did not care at all if his feet *did* get wet in the melting snow.

At last one afternoon when his paws were quite well again Cuffy strayed some distance down the side of Blue Mountain, He was alone, because Silkie was asleep. You know, she was younger than Cuffy and still had to take naps. Cuffy had slid and tumbled down the mountainside until he was further from home than he knew. It did seem good to be able to put his paws upon the ground again without whimpering with pain. And coming to a short, steep place, Cuffy felt so glad that he actually turned a somersault and landed in a heap at the foot of the bank. He sat there for a moment, brushing the soft snow out of his face, when a flash of light dazzled his eyes. It came from a tree right in front of him. And Cuffy at once jumped up and ran to see what it was. He found that some one had fastened a shiny, new tin bucket to the trunk of the tree.

Cuffy felt that he *must* have that bucket to play with. He knew that he could have heaps of fun rolling it about on the ground. And he was just going to knock it off the hook that

held it when he noticed that a small spout had been driven into the tree just above the bucket. And as Cuffy stood there on his hind legs, reaching up as high as he could, he saw a tiny drop fall from the spout and go splash! into the bucket. Then, as he watched, another drop fell; and another and another and another. Cuffy wondered where they came from. It must be—he thought—that there was a spring inside that tree. Yes! he was sure of it, for the bucket was half full of water. He felt thirsty, for he had not had a drink since lunch-time. And so Cuffy stuck his head into the pail and took a good, big swallow.

The next instant he squealed with joy. It was the nicest water he had ever tasted in all his life, for it was quite sweet—just as if somebody had left a heap of honey in the bottom of the bucket. But when Cuffy licked the end of the spout with his little red tongue he found that that tasted sweet too. Yes! it certainly was a wonderful spring. Cuffy was very glad that he had found it. And he

decided that he would drink all he could of the delicious, sweet water and leave the pail hanging there. Then he could come back the next day and there would be more of that wonderful water all ready and waiting for him to drink up.

IV

CUFFY LEARNS SOMETHING

After leaving the wonderful spring Cuffy Bear was so long getting home that he decided he would not say anything to his father and mother about what he had found. You see—he was afraid they would tell him not to go so far away from home again. But Cuffy had not been long in the snug little house before he had a terrible stomach-ache. He stood the pain as long as he could without saying anything. But he simply *had* to hang onto his little fat stomach with both his front paws. And at last he began to cry softly. Then Mrs. Bear asked him what he had been doing; and before Cuffy knew it he had told all about finding the delicious, sweet water.

"How much did you drink?" asked his mother.

"Oh—only a little," Cuffy answered faintly.

Then Mrs. Bear nodded her head three times. She was very wise—was Mrs. Bear. And she knew quite well that Cuffy had drunk a great deal too much of that nice-tasting water. So she made Cuffy lie down and gave him some peppermint leaves to chew. In a little while he began to feel so much better that before he knew it he had fallen asleep.

When Cuffy waked up he found that his father had come home. And soon Mr. Bear had Cuffy on one knee, and Silkie on the other, and he was telling them all about maple-sugar. For of course you knew all the time that what Cuffy had found was not a spring at all—but a sugar-maple tree, which Farmer Green had tapped so that he might gather the sap and boil it until it turned to maple-sugar. If Cuffy had gone further down the mountainside he would have found a

great many other trees, each—like the one he discovered—with a tin bucket hanging on it to catch the sweet sap.

"So you see there are many things for little bears to learn," Mr. Bear said, when he had finished. "And the one *big* lesson you must learn is to keep away from men. Farmer Green visits those trees every day to gather the sap. So you must not go down there again."

A cold shiver went up and down Cuffy's back at these words. Farmer Green! Cuffy had heard a great deal about Farmer Green and he certainly did not want to meet him all alone and far from home. But as soon as the tickle of that shiver stopped, Cuffy forgot all about his fright.

"This maple-sugar—does it taste as good as the sweet sap?" he asked his father.

"Yes, my son—a hundred times better!" Mr. Bear replied. "I ate some once And I shall never forget it."

A hundred times better! After he had gone to bed that night the words kept ringing in Cuffy's ears. *A hundred times better! A hundred times better!... A hundred*—And now Cuffy was fast asleep and—I am sorry to say it—sucking one of his paws for all the world as if it was a piece of Farmer Green's maple-sugar.

V

CUFFY AND THE MAPLE-SUGAR

Another day had come and all the morning long Cuffy Bear and his sister Silkie played and played as hard as they could. They played that they were making maple-sugar. And they pretended to hang buckets on all the trees near Mr. Bear's house. There were no maple trees about Cuffy's home—only pine and hemlock and spruce—but if you are just *pretending* to make maple-sugar any sort of tree will do.

While they were playing Cuffy kept wishing for some *real* maple-sugar. After all, the little cakes of snow that he and Silkie made

and *called* maple-sugar seemed very tasteless, no matter how much Cuffy pretended. And later, when Silkie was taking her nap, and Cuffy had no one to play with, he became so angry with the make-believe sugar that he struck the little pats of snow as hard as he could and spoiled them. And then, after one look toward the door of his father's house—to make sure that his mother did not see him—Cuffy started on a trot down the mountainside.

What do you suppose he was going to do?

To tell the truth, Cuffy himself did not quite know. When he came to the tree that he had found the day before he stopped and drank some of the sap once more; and he tried to imagine how sugar would taste *a hundred times sweeter*. Then Cuffy went on down the mountainside.

At last he spied a little house in a clearing. From its chimney a stream of smoke rose, and as Cuffy peeped from behind a tree he saw a man come out and pick up an armful

of wood from the woodpile nearby. While Cuffy watched, the man carried in several loads. Soon the smoke began fairly to pour out of the chimney; and then the man came out once more, picked up an axe near the woodpile, and started off toward the other side of the clearing.

Cuffy was trembling with excitement. The wind blew right in his face and brought to him two odors that were quite different. One was the man-scent, which Cuffy did not like at all, and which made his legs want to run away. The other smell was most delightfully sweet. And it made his nose want to go forward.

Which do you think won—Cuffy's nose or his legs?... Yes! His nose won! Pretty soon Cuffy slipped from behind the tree and scampered as fast as he could run to the door of the sugar-house—for that was what he had found. He stuck his head inside and oh, joy! there was no one there.

Just inside the door stood a tub full of something brown. One sniff told Cuffy that it was maple-sugar and he began to gulp great mouthfuls of it. Yes! his father was right. It certainly was a hundred times sweeter than the sap.

In the middle of the room was a big pan which gave off clouds of steam. Cuffy wanted to see it. And with his mouth full of sugar he walked up to the pan and looked into it. He saw a golden liquid, and Cuffy felt that he simply *must* taste that too. So he dipped both his front paws right into the bubbling syrup.

VI

CUFFY MEETS A MAN

And then how Cuffy Bear did roar—just one second after he had stuck his paws into the steaming pan. You see—he was so greedy that he had never once stopped to think that the syrup was boiling hot.

Now, usually if you pick up anything hot you can drop it at once. But it is not so with hot maple syrup. Cuffy's paws were covered with the sticky brown stuff. He rubbed them upon his trousers, and he roared again when he saw what he had done.

Then Cuffy had a happy thought. He would go out and shove his paws into a snowbank. That would surely cool them. So out of the

sugar-house he dashed and across the clearing he ran, screaming "*Ough! ough! ough!*" at the top of his voice, for the hot syrup made his paws smart terribly. In his haste Cuffy did not notice that he was headed in the direction in which the man had disappeared.

Now it happened that the man who tended the sugar-house fire had gone only to the edge of the clearing; and when he heard Cuffy's shrieks he looked around in great surprise. He and Cuffy saw each other at the same time. And like a flash Cuffy turned and fairly flew the other way.

The man ran after him for a few steps. But he soon saw that he could never catch Cuffy. So he stood still and watched the little bear bob into the woods and vanish.

Poor Cuffy's heart was beating as if it would burst. He was so frightened that he forgot all about his burned paws and he ran and ran and ran up the steep mountainside. He did not mind the climb; he was used to that. But

THE SYRUP WAS BOILING HOT

to his great alarm the snow clung to his sticky paws until each was just a great, round lump. They looked like the hands of a snow-man.

Cuffy found it very hard to run with his paws like that. But he kept on and on, until at last he came in sight of his father's house. Then he stopped and sat down, right behind a knoll, where his mother could not see him. He was very tired. And though he was no longer afraid that the man would catch him, he began to be afraid of something else.... A punishing? No—no! He had not thought of that. Cuffy was afraid that he could never get rid of those big heavy lumps. He was afraid his paws would always be covered with those hard balls of snow. You must remember that he was a very *young* little bear.

Well! After he had got his breath again Cuffy began to nibble at his snow mittens. And little by little—to his delight—he

removed them. And still he kept on nibbling at his paws, and—yes! he actually put them right inside his mouth and sucked them. He forgot all about his *manners*, for underneath the snow he found the most beautiful, waxy maple-sugar you can imagine. Each paw was just one big lollypop! And though his burns still hurt him, Cuffy did not care very much. For those lollypops were *two hundred times* sweeter than anything he had ever tasted in all his life!

VII

THE ICE GOES OUT OF THE RIVER

Farmer Green had taken his sap-buckets off the maple trees and *that* meant the spring was fast going. At least, that was what Mr. Bear said. And Cuffy noticed that every day there was a little less snow than there had been the day before.

"The ice will soon go out," Mr. Bear said to Cuffy's mother at breakfast one morning, "and then when I cross Pleasant Valley I shall have to swim the river."

Cuffy knew that his father meant Swift River. In summer Cuffy could look down from Blue Mountain and see the stream as it flashed through the valley.

"Will the ice go out of the river to-day?" Cuffy asked.

"Well, now—" Mr. Bear said, "it might. And then again, it might not." Mr. Bear never said a thing was *so* unless he was sure of it.

Now, Cuffy thought it would be great fun to go down into the valley and find out for himself if the ice really did go out. He had an idea that it caused a terrific splitting and crashing and thundering noise and he thought that perhaps some fish would be tossed up on the bank and then he would have a good lunch.

When Mr. Bear had gone off down the mountain, "to see a bear," as he explained to his wife, little Cuffy sneaked away from the house. His mother was making the beds, and Silkie was pretending to help her. Now,

nobody *sneaks* unless he knows he is doing something wrong. Cuffy knew that his parents would not let him go down into the valley alone, so he went without asking. And when he did at last come to the river there was ice along both banks; but between them ran a broad stream of swift water.

"The ice must have gone out in the night," Cuffy said to himself. And he looked about in the hope of finding some fish on the banks. But not one fish could he find.

He was disappointed. And he crept out onto the ice as far as he could go and peeped over the edge into the water. He thought maybe he could at least catch a fish with his paw.

Cuffy lay quite still for a long time. And then at last to his delight he saw a fish right before him. He made a quick reach for it. And then there was a sharp *crack!* The ice tipped and Cuffy clung to it with all his claws to keep from falling into the river. He backed away from the edge and looked around. The bank was moving past him. He

had never seen such a thing and he was surprised.

Then he gave a cry which sounded in his throat like "*Oug!*" and ended with "*I-s-s-s!*" through his nose. It meant that Cuffy was frightened. For he saw that the ice he was on had broken away and was floating rapidly down the stream.

He had not caught the fish, either. But he forgot all about that now.

VIII

CUFFY LEARNS TO SWIM

Yes! Cuffy Bear was floating down the river on a cake of ice! How he wished he had been a good little bear and stayed at home, instead of running away to the river all alone! He was huddled up in a little black heap in the center of the cake, and crying as if his heart would break. For Cuffy thought he would never see his mother and father and Silkie again. If only he knew how to swim, like his father! But he didn't; and there he was, being swept away down the valley, right toward Farmer Green's house. It certainly was enough to make anybody weep.

When Cuffy thought about Farmer Green he was more frightened than ever and he began to scream. He remembered all the dreadful things he had heard about men and the things they do to little bears.

Pretty soon Cuffy saw something move up on the bank ahead of him. And he stopped screaming. He was afraid that it was Farmer Green himself and he thought he had better keep still. Then perhaps Farmer Green wouldn't see him. But to his dismay the big black thing began to slide down the steep bank right toward the river.

Cuffy's heart seemed to stand still. He shut his eyes tight and tried to make himself as small as he could. And he hardly breathed.

Then somebody called his name. Cuffy was so surprised that he looked up, and there was his father standing on the edge of the stream. Cuffy was *so* glad to see him!

Mr. Bear seemed very cross, but Cuffy did not mind that, he was *so* glad to see his father.

"Oh, Father! What shall I do?" Cuffy cried.

Mr. Bear said just one word. It was "*Jump!*"

Cuffy could hardly believe his ears.

"*Jump!*" said Mr. Bear again.

"I don't know how to swim," Cuffy whined.

"*Jump, jump, jump!*" Mr. Bear repeated very sternly.

Still Cuffy did not jump. He was so afraid of that rushing water!

Then Mr. Bear became very, very angry. He gave a great roar and plunged into the icy water. With a few strong strokes—for Mr. Bear was a fine swimmer—he reached the middle of the river. And as he swam close up to Cuffy he reached out and gave that naughty, frightened little bear a shove that sent him flying into the stream.

Cuffy started to scream. But his shriek was cut off short as he sank, head and all, into the cold, cold river. In another moment his nose came up out of the water. It was only an instant, but to Cuffy it seemed a long, long time before he could breathe again. And now, to his great surprise, he found that he was swimming as well as his father.

Now, little bears are different from little boys and girls. They don't have to *learn* to swim. Cuffy didn't know it. But his father did. That was why Mr. Bear told him to jump. He knew that as soon as Cuffy found himself in the water he could swim as well as anybody.

In another minute Cuffy and his father were safe on the bank, and in another second after that they were running toward home as fast as Cuffy could go, so they wouldn't take cold, you know.

Cuffy had to go to bed for the rest of the day, as a punishment. And as he lay on his little bed he could hear his father and mother

laughing in the next room. He didn't see how they could laugh. But you know, Cuffy didn't realize how funny he had looked, floating down the river on the cake of ice.

IX

A SURPRISE

One day Cuffy Bear and his little sister Silkie had been making sand pies. And now, having grown tired of that, they were squatting down on the ground and had covered their legs with the clean white sand. Perhaps they would have heaped the sand all over themselves, if Silkie had not spied her father as he came climbing up the mountain. When they noticed that he was carrying something they both sprang up and ran to see what Mr. Bear was bringing home.

Mr. Bear's mouth was stretched quite wide in what Silkie and Cuffy knew to be his most agreeable smile. You and I might not

have felt so comfortable if we had looked past Mr. Bear's great white teeth into his big red mouth. But it was different with Cuffy and Silkie. They saw at once that their father was feeling very pleasant.

"What's that?" Silkie asked. As for Cuffy, he had not stopped to ask any questions. He was already smelling of the small white animal his father had, and he poked it gently with his paw. He had not forgotten about the porcupine. But this strange animal seemed quite harmless. It was covered with things that looked a little bit like quills, only they were ever so much shorter and smaller. And Cuffy found that they were much softer, too, for they did not prick him at all.

"What is it?" This time it was Cuffy who asked.

"You'll see," Mr. Bear said again.

"Is it a new kind of rabbit?" Silkie inquired.

"Huh! A rabbit!" Cuffy laughed. "Of course it isn't a rabbit," he said.

"Well—it's white, and its tail is short—" Silkie began, "and—"

"Its ears are too small," Cuffy told her, "and its tail is all curled up."

"You'll see, children," Mr. Bear said again. "It's a surprise."

"A surprise!" Cuffy and Silkie both shouted. They thought that was the name of the—oh! I almost told what the little animal really was.

Well! As Mr. Bear walked on toward his house, Cuffy and Silkie ran ahead and burst in upon their mother, both of them shouting at the top of their voices, "A surprise! A surprise! Father's bringing home a surprise!"

"Why, Ephraim Bear!" Mrs. Bear exclaimed, as soon as she saw her husband. "Wherever did you get that lovely little pig?"

There—now you know what it was that Mr. Bear had.

"It came from Farmer Green's, my dear," Mr. Bear said. "I remembered that this was your birthday, and so I thought I would bring home something 'specially nice, so that we could have a real feast."

Cuffy and Silkie had never eaten any pig before. And when there was nothing left of the surprise except a few bones, Cuffy couldn't help wishing that every day could be a birthday.

X

CUFFY CLIMBS BLUE MOUNTAIN

Cuffy Bear had never been very far up Blue Mountain beyond the place where his father's house nestled among the evergreens. You know, the summer before he had been a very small little bear indeed, and the higher one goes up Blue Mountain the harder the climbing becomes. But now Cuffy was growing very fast; and he was able to scramble up places he could never have even crept a year ago. Each day now Cuffy climbed a little nearer the top of Blue Mountain. And at last the day came when he reached the very top. It was so high that the trees did not grow there.

He found nothing but rocks everywhere, with just a little earth to fill the cracks.

Cuffy thought it great fun to clamber about all by himself and look down at the hills and valleys that stretched away in all directions. Indeed, he hated to leave that delightful spot. But he noticed that the sun was getting low in the west and he knew that he must hurry home. So Cuffy started down the mountainside.

He did not pick out the easiest way to go. Oh, no! He chose the very steepest places to slide down. And as he went slipping down the steepest cliff of all he came upon something that gave him a great surprise. For he saw, built right in the crack of a ledge, a big bird's nest made of sticks. It was the biggest bird's nest Cuffy had ever seen; and in it were two great white eggs. They were the greatest white eggs Cuffy had ever seen, too.

How lucky! At least, that was what Cuffy thought then. For he was very fond of birds'

eggs, and his climb had made him even hungrier than usual. He stopped then and there and with one rap of the paw he broke one of the eggs and began to eat it.

Cuffy was enjoying his lunch very much. He had almost finished the first egg and was just about to turn to the other when he heard a deafening scream.

Cuffy looked all around. He thought that perhaps there was a pig up there on the mountain. But no! He couldn't see a thing. Then came that cry again. This time it was louder. And it seemed to come from right over Cuffy's head. He looked up then. And there was an enormous bird dropping right down on top of him! It seemed to Cuffy that its wings stretched as wide as the branches of the great pine tree in his father's front-yard. He never even dreamed that there could be as big a bird in the whole world. And during that one instant that Cuffy's little beady bright eyes were turned upwards he saw that the great bird had a wicked, hooked

beak and claws that were as sharp as his own, and ever so much longer.

One look was enough for Cuffy. He turned and tumbled down the steep cliff, head over heels, with the eagle following him.

XI

MRS. EAGLE IS ANGRY

Yes! It was an eagle's nest that Cuffy Bear had found, And Mrs. Eagle had caught him eating her eggs. It was no wonder that she was wild with rage. And it was no wonder that Cuffy ran for his life.

He landed in a heap at the foot of the first cliff, jumped up like a flash and in a twinkling he was rolling heels over head down another cliff.

Again Cuffy fell in a heap at the bottom. Again he jumped up. And again he started to run. But this time, alas! Mrs. Eagle seized him. She pounced down upon his back; and she sunk her claws right into Cuffy's neck.

Then Mrs. Eagle flapped her wings as hard as she could flap them. And Cuffy felt himself rising.

Soon the earth was far, far beneath Cuffy. And he was the most frightened little bear you could imagine. He was afraid Mrs. Eagle would drop him, and that he would fall down, down, down onto the rocks below. And he was afraid that Mrs. Eagle wouldn't drop him, too. Because if she didn't Cuffy felt only too sure that she would take him home and that she and Mr. Eagle would eat him for their dinner.

You see, Cuffy Bear was in a sad fix. And for my part, when I first heard of his plight I did not see how he was ever going to get out of it alive.

Well—this was what happened. Mrs. Eagle *did* intend to take Cuffy home with her and serve him up for dinner that very night At first, after she had seized Cuffy, she mounted higher and higher into the air, so that she could at last swoop down on the top of the

Mrs. Eagle Rose Higher and Higher

mountain, right beside her nest. But Cuffy was a very fat little bear. And soon Mrs. Eagle found that she had a heavy load. And it was only a few minutes before she discovered that she couldn't fly up any higher with Cuffy. In fact, she began to sink, little by little. Yes, Cuffy was so heavy that as Mrs. Eagle grew tired his weight dragged her down toward the earth again.

Mrs. Eagle saw what was happening. But she didn't want to let Cuffy go. So she flew far out from the side of the mountain, hoping that she would soon feel stronger. But all the time she kept growing weaker and weaker. And all the time she kept falling faster and faster, until all at once Mrs. Eagle was afraid that she would lose her balance and go tumbling down onto the ground herself.

She was still very angry. And she hated to lose the fine dinner she had been counting on. But she saw nothing else to do but let go of Cuffy Bear. So she gave one last scream of rage; and the next instant Cuffy felt

himself dropping through the air like a stone.

Now, Cuffy had shut his eyes tight, just as he did when he was drifting down the river on the cake of ice; so he did not see what was happening. But as luck had it, when Mrs. Eagle let him go she was flying right over the top of a big fir-tree. And as Cuffy fell, he dropped *plump!* into the branches, and down he went, crashing through the soft, springing boughs.

Cuffy clutched wildly at the branches. And though he tumbled through them one after another, at last he managed to hold tight to a big limb. And then, after he had caught his breath again, he crept carefully down to the ground.

He wondered where he was. The place had a strangely familiar look. It seemed to Cuffy that he must have been there before. And then, as he peered cautiously around, what should he see but the door of his father's house, right in front of him! Yes! Mrs. Eagle

had dropped Cuffy right in his father's door-yard! And Cuffy wasn't even late for dinner.

As he grew older Cuffy often went to the top of Blue Mountain. But never, so long as he lived, did he get home again so quickly.

XII

CUFFY BEAR GOES TO MARKET

"Mother! When is my birthday?" Cuffy asked, a few days after his father had brought home the little pig.

"Why, your birthday comes on the day the wild geese begin to fly south," Mrs. Bear said.

"Is that soon?" Cuffy asked.

"Bless you, no! Not for months and months!" his mother said.

"And when is Silkie's?" he continued.

"The day of the first snow," she told him.

Cuffy knew that that was a long way off—not until summer had come and gone.

"And Father's?" he inquired once more.

Mrs. Bear shook her head.

"Your father hasn't many birthdays," she said. "He was born on the day of the great forest fire. It may be a long time before he has another birthday. I hope so, anyhow," she added, "for a great forest fire is a dreadful thing."

Now you see, having a birthday like that is a good deal like being born on the twenty-ninth of February, when you have a birthday only once in four years. Yes—it's a good deal like that, only worse. For you may have to wait years and years before another great fire comes. You understand, of course, that having no clocks or calendars or anything like that, the wild animals can keep track of birthdays only by remembering things that happen.

this made Cuffy Bear feel very sad. He had been hoping that some member of the family would have a birthday soon, and then perhaps his father would bring home another little pig for another nice feast. But now he saw that there was no chance of that happening for a long, long time.

Cuffy went out of doors then and thought and thought and thought. I'm almost ashamed to have to say it—he was planning to go down to Farmer Green's and get another fat, tender, little pig like the one his father had brought home.

Now, when a very young bear starts out to steal a pig there are many things to think of. In the first place, there was Farmer Green, and Farmer Green's boy Johnnie, and Farmer Green's hired man. Cuffy knew that he must be very, very careful not to meet them.

To his great relief, when he had gone down into Pleasant Valley Cuffy saw all three ploughing in a field. They did not see him at

all. And so he felt very brave as he went on toward the farm buildings.

Farmer Green's pig-pen was in a little, low building next the cow-barn. Cuffy had no trouble in finding it. And he walked inside quite boldly and before you could have winked, almost, he had seized a little, white pig in his mouth and was loping off across the barnyard.

The pig had looked very small to Cuffy when he first saw and seized it. But now it seemed to be as many as twenty times bigger than Cuffy was himself. That was because the pig made the most frightful noise Cuffy had ever heard in all his life. Cuffy felt as if he had a hundred pigs in his mouth, with their hundred snouts squealing right in his ears. Though Farmer Green was at least a mile away, Cuffy was sure he could hear. Indeed, Cuffy thought that all the world must hear that dreadful racket. And he was so frightened that he let go of the little pig and ran away towards home as fast as he could jump.

That squealing rang in his ears for a long time. And if Cuffy's father had brought home a pig that night Cuffy couldn't have eaten a mouthful of it. He never wanted to see or taste of a pig again. And you may be sure he never wanted to *hear* one, either.

XIII

HAYING-TIME

After Cuffy Bear's adventure with Mrs. Eagle he did not stray far from home for several weeks. You can see, from that, that he had been badly frightened. Yes—just to look at a crow flapping through the air made Cuffy dizzy now; and nothing would have tempted him to go up the mountain again.

But Cuffy became very tired of playing near his father's house all the time. And at last he wandered down into the valley one day. There was something down there that Cuffy wanted to see. You'd never guess what it was; so I'll tell you. Cuffy Bear wanted to see a mowing-machine. You may think that was queer. But you see, it was summer now. And down in the valley Farmer Green was making hay as fast as ever he could. Early

and late there sounded far up the mountainside the *click-clack-click-clack* of Farmer Green's mowing-machine.

When he first heard it Cuffy Bear had been very much alarmed; and he had come running into the house in a great fright. But his mother explained what the sound was. And after that Cuffy had been very curious to see that wonderful machine, which was pulled back and forth through the meadows by horses, leaving behind it a broad path of grass which lay flat on the ground.

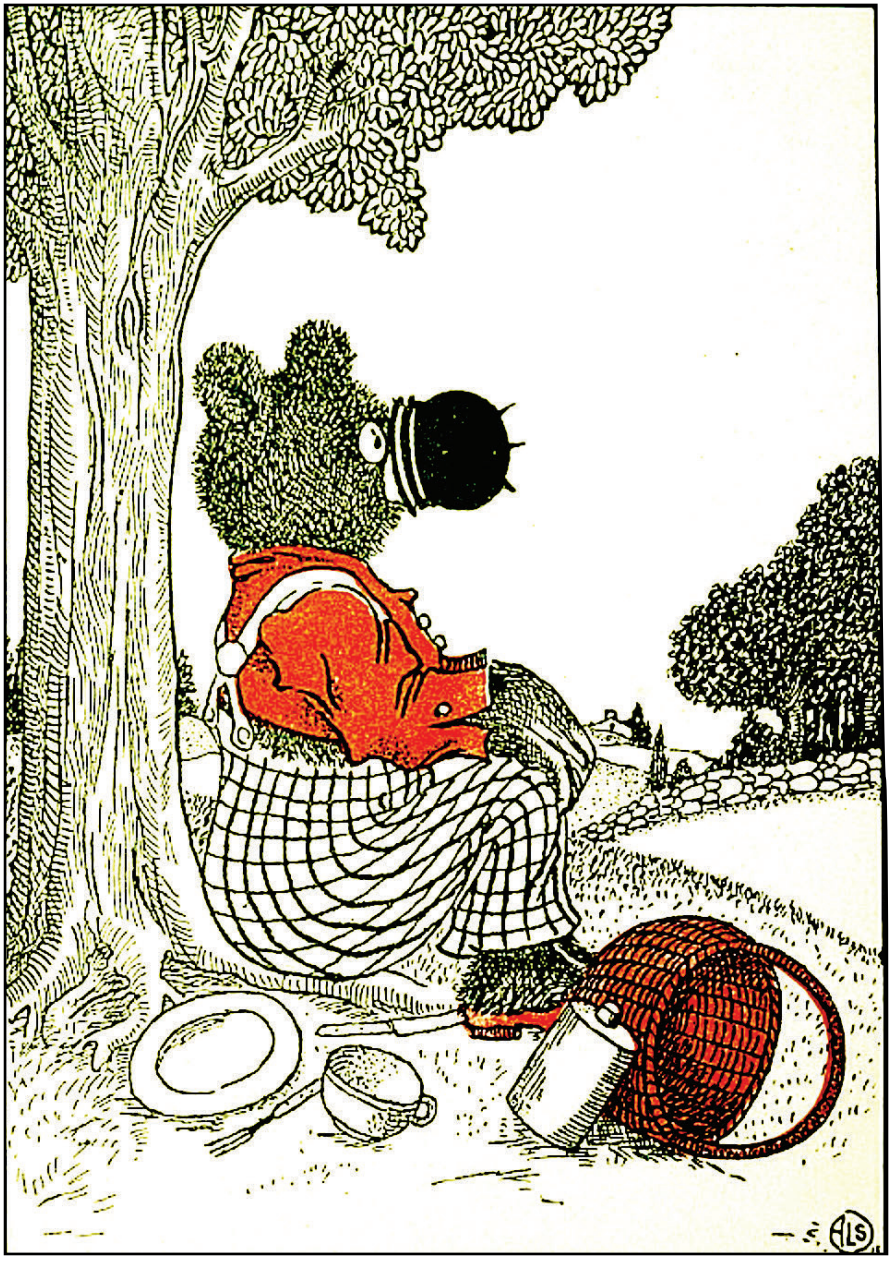
So that was the reason why Cuffy stole away from home. He felt that he simply *must* see a mowing-machine. Nothing but the sight of a mowing-machine would make him happy. He was sure of that.

Now, where Farmer Green's meadow met the forest, Cuffy paused. He hid behind a tree and looked out over the field. The *click-clack* sounded quite loud now. And from the other side of the meadow Cuffy could see two horses coming towards him. There was

a man driving them. And Cuffy thought that they must be drawing the mowing-machine. So he waited quietly. And all the time the *click-clack-click-clack* grew louder than ever. And pretty soon, as he peeped slyly around the tree, Cuffy Bear saw the mowing-machine. It came delightfully close to him, stopped, turned about, and moved away again toward the opposite side of the field.

Cuffy gave a great sigh of satisfaction. He had seen a mowing-machine. He was glad that he had come down into the valley. He was not the least bit sorry that he had disobeyed his parents and stolen away from home.

Yes, Cuffy was feeling very happy as he went prowling along the border of the forest. He crept in and out of the bushes that fringed the hay-field, and was having altogether a most pleasant time; until all at once he stopped short. Cuffy's nose sniffed the air for a moment, and the hairs on his back bristled just like those on a dog when



he is startled. Cuffy had caught a strange odor in the air.

At first he was frightened. But after he had sniffed the air a few times he decided that whatever it was that he smelled, it had a good, pleasant odor, and made him think of something to eat.

So Cuffy Bear began to nose about among the bushes. And presently he discovered, hidden away beneath a clump of ferns, a basket of delicious food. It was the haymakers' lunch that Cuffy had found. And he lost no time. He began to eat as fast as he could. Yes—I am very sorry to say that Cuffy actually *gobbled* Farmer Green's lunch. And he was so greedy that a strange thing happened to him.

XIV

CUFFY LIKES BAKED BEANS

Cuffy Bear found many good things in Farmer Green's lunch basket. He bolted all the bread-and-butter, and the doughnuts; and he found the custard pie to be about as enjoyable as any dainty he had ever tasted. And then, with his little black face all smeared with streaks of yellow custard, Cuffy began to poke a small iron pot which stood in one corner of the big basket. Presently the pot tipped over, its cover fell off, and soon Cuffy was devouring the daintiest dish of all! Baked beans! Of course, he didn't know the name of those delicious, brown, mealy kernels. But that made no difference at all to Cuffy. So long as he liked what he was eating the name of it

never troubled him. The only thing that annoyed Cuffy now was that the pot was not bigger. There were still a few beans which clung to the bottom; and try as he would, Cuffy could not reach them, even with his tongue.

He was sitting on the ground, with the pot between his legs, and his nose stuck into it as far as Cuffy could get it. But still he could not reach those beans in the bottom. And pretty soon Cuffy began to lose his temper. He stood up and gave a good, hard push against the ground. And so he managed to squeeze his nose a little further into the bean-pot. And now, to his huge delight, he could just reach the bottom of the pot with his long under-lip. In a twinkling Cuffy had all the beans in his mouth. And he would have grinned—he felt so happy—if his nose hadn't been wedged so tightly into the pot that he couldn't even smile.

Since there were no more beans to be had out of *that* pot, Cuffy lifted his head. And to his great astonishment the bean-pot came

right up off the ground too, almost as if it were alive. It startled Cuffy, until he saw that it was he who lifted the pot, on his own nose.

He seized the bean-pot and pulled. But his paws were so greasy with butter that he couldn't get a good grip on it. The pot still stuck on his nose as fast as ever.

Cuffy grunted. He couldn't really have said anything, with his mouth deep in the iron pot. So he just grunted in a pouting sort of way; and then he gave the pot a sharp rap against a rock. That hurt his nose. And this time he growled—as well as he could. But all his grunting and growling didn't frighten the bean-pot the slightest bit. There it stayed, perched on his nose just as if it would never come off.

All this time the mowing-machine kept up a *click-clack-click-clack*! And Cuffy thought that he had better get out of sight. So he plunged into the forest and started toward home. He felt very uncomfortable, for he

began to wonder whether he would ever get rid of that troublesome pot. What puzzled him most was this thought: How would he ever be able to eat again, with that horrid thing over his nose? Cuffy was very fond of riddles; but here was one that he did not like at all.

When he reached home his father and mother and Silkie all laughed so hard at the sight of him that Cuffy began to whimper. And a big tear rolled from each eye, ran down the bean-pot, and dropped off the bottom of it.

And then, with just one tug Mr. Bear pulled the bean-pot off his son's nose; and Cuffy was himself again.

He escaped a punishing, too, that time. And Mrs. Bear was very glad to get such a nice iron pot. She had wanted one for a long time.

XV

HUNTING FOR A BEE-TREE

It was a very hot summer's day. Even up on Blue Mountain Cuffy Bear felt the heat. And he wished that he might get rid of his thick coat. But though Cuffy was beginning to believe himself a very wise little bear, he could think of no way to slip off his heavy black fur. So he sat down in the shade of a big tree, where the breeze blew upon him, and tried to be as cool as he could.

Except when he was asleep it was not often that Cuffy was still for so long. But now he sat motionless for some time, with his bright red tongue hanging out of his mouth like a dog's. Yes, he was quite still—all but his

little, beady, bright eyes. *They* kept moving about all the time. And they saw many things, for something or other is always happening in the forest.

Cuffy saw a gray squirrel stick its head up from the crotch of a tree nearby and peep at him. And he watched a wary old crow as he rested high in a tree-top and cawed a greeting to some of his friends who were flying past on their way to Farmer Green's cornfield. And Cuffy noticed a bee as it lighted on a wild-flower right in front of him and sucked the sweetness out of it. But Cuffy didn't pay much attention to that. And since he soon began to feel cooler he was just wondering what he would do next when it occurred to him that several bees had lighted upon the flowers near him, and that they had all flown off *in the same direction*.

All at once Cuffy forgot how hot and uncomfortable he had been; for now he was wondering if those bees weren't all of them flying home to make honey out of the sweet juices they had drawn from the flowers. And

if they were—and if he could only follow them—then he would find the tree where they lived and he could have all the honey he wanted to eat.

So Cuffy followed on a little way in the direction in which the bees had disappeared. And then he sat down again and waited and watched very carefully.

For a long time nothing happened. And Cuffy was just about to give up his plan when a bee came buzzing past him and lighted on a mulberry blossom right above his head. And when the bee flew away, Cuffy followed him until he lost sight of him. And then Cuffy sat down once more. Again he waited and watched. And again, just as he was getting discouraged, another bee flew past him and Cuffy jumped up and followed *him* just as fast as he could.

Cuffy Bear must have spent as much as two hours doing that same thing over and over again. But he didn't mind that. In fact, it didn't seem long to him, at all, because he

kept thinking of *honey* all the time, and it made a sort of *game* of what he was doing. If he won the game, you know, it meant that he was going to have something very nice for a prize.

And sure enough, finally one of the bees Cuffy was following lighted on an old tree, and Cuffy saw him crawl into a hole in a queer nest which hung from a limb, and vanish. And as Cuffy stood there, looking up at the nest, he saw as many as seven bees come out of that hole and fly away.

Then Cuffy smiled all over his face, he felt so happy. At last he had found a bee-tree. There was no doubt about it. The time he had always wished for had come. He was going to have all the honey he could eat.

XVI

THE BEES STING CUFFY

As Cuffy Bear stood there on his hind legs looking up at the nest in the old tree he saw so many bees come out and fly away that he thought that there could not be any bees left at home—at least, not more than a half-dozen. And Cuffy didn't believe that six bees would trouble him. There was one good thing in having a coat like his, he told himself: even if it was warm in summer, it was so thick that he didn't see how a bee could sting him through it.

And with that, Cuffy started to climb the old tree. It took him no time at all to hitch himself up the trunk. He shinned up just as any little boy would climb a tree. And in less

time than it takes to tell it, Cuffy had reached the limb from which the nest hung, and he had stuck his paw right through the side of it.

You remember that something is always happening in the forest? Well—something happened now. Suddenly a terrible roar came from inside the nest. It was a queer, far-off sort of sound, and it made Cuffy think of the noise Swift River made, where it tumbled over the falls. But Cuffy knew that there could be no water-fall inside the nest. He wondered if there was some strange animal in there.... And he drew back his paw very quickly. And then there came pouring out of the nest a perfect cloud of bees, every one of them buzzing as loud as ever he could.

Cuffy was startled at the sight. And he was more startled when they flew right into his face and lighted on his nose and began to sting.

Cuffy roared with the pain. Yes—he gave such a great roar that he couldn't hear the bees at all. But the bees didn't seem to mind that. *They* weren't afraid. They just kept on stinging. And they went for Cuffy's eyes, too. And some of them even crawled down his ears. *That* was the worst of all.

Just for a few moments Cuffy slapped at the bees. And he tried to brush them off his face. But as fast as he swept them away from one spot they settled on another. And Cuffy felt exactly as if somebody was sticking him with pins and needles. He forgot all about taking any of the honey to eat. He only wanted to get away from those bees. So he began to slide down the tree.

But Cuffy soon saw that the bees intended to go right along with him. They seemed to have no idea at all of staying at home, and as he scrambled down the tree Cuffy thought very quickly. He hadn't put a paw on the ground before he knew what he was going to do. Cuffy Bear ran straight for the brook that

goes tumbling down Blue Mountain to meet Swift River.

XVII

CUFFY BEAR GOES SWIMMING

As Cuffy Bear tore through the forest, with the bees clustering all about his head, he thought he never would reach the brook. He was going straight for the deep pool, which he had often visited in order to watch the speckled trout darting about in the clear water.

Now and then Cuffy paused in his mad rush, to bury his face in the thick blanket of dead leaves that covered the ground. But just as soon as he raised his head the bees would settle on his face again. And Cuffy would rush off once more as fast as he could go.

At last he came to the brook. And he leaped right off the big boulder that hung high over

The Bees Were Right There Waiting for Cuffy

the pool and landed *ker-splash!* right in the middle of it. How the water did fly in all directions! And Cuffy went right down out of sight.

Of course, the bees wouldn't go down into the water too. They knew they'd be drowned if they did. So they lingered in a swarm above the water. They hovered there in the air and waited. And when, after a moment, Cuffy's head came up out of the pool, they swooped down and began to sting him again.

Cuffy promptly ducked his head. And he swam under water to the further side of the pool and came up once more. To his surprise the bees were right there waiting for him. And he ducked under again, and swam to the opposite side, near the big boulder. And once more, when he came up to breathe, he found the buzzing bees all ready to pounce upon his nose.

So poor Cuffy had to keep pulling his head down into the pool. He would keep it there

just as long as he could hold his breath; and then he would simply *have* to stick his nose out of the water in order to draw some fresh air into his lungs.

It was not long before Cuffy became very tired from so much swimming. So he found a shallow place where he could stand on the bottom of the brook, with just enough water to cover him, and where he could poke his nose out whenever he had to. And just as often as his little black nose came up above the surface of the pool the bees lighted on it and stung Cuffy again.

All the rest of the afternoon poor Cuffy had to stay there in the water. For the bees did not leave him until sundown. And then, when the last one had gone, Cuffy crawled out of the brook and started toward home. His little round body and his sturdy little legs were not warm now, as they had been when he sat down beneath the tree to get cool. For the mountain brook was ice-cold; and Cuffy felt quite numb from standing in it so long. But cold as he was, his face felt

like fire. And for some reason, which Cuffy couldn't understand, he could hardly see to pick his way through the shadows of the forest.

XVIII

CUFFY FRIGHTENS HIS MOTHER

When Cuffy Bear reached home, after his adventure with the bees, he found that his father and mother and his sister Silkie were just sitting down to their evening meal. Cuffy didn't speak to them as he came into the room where they were. He felt too miserable to say a word, with his face aching and burning, and a terrible smarting in his eyes. So he just stumbled inside the room and tried to make himself as small as he could, so he wouldn't be noticed.

Cuffy's parents and his little sister all looked at the little bear who had come into their

house without even a knock. And his father said, in a cross voice—

"Go away, little bear. Where are your manners?"

Cuffy didn't know what to make of that. He didn't know what his father meant. So he just stood there and stared.

"What do you want?" his father asked him. "Whose little bear are you? And whatever is the matter with your face?"

Actually, Cuffy's own father didn't know him. And neither did his mother or his sister. You see, Cuffy's face was so swollen from the bees' stings that his face did not look like a little bear's face at all. His nose, instead of being smooth and pointed, was one great lump. And he hadn't a sign of an eye—just two slits.

"What's the matter with you?" Mr. Bear asked again. "Are you ill? Have you the black measles?"

At that, Mrs. Bear rose hastily from the table and snatched Silkie up from her high-chair and took her right out of the room. The thought of black measles frightened Mrs. Bear. You know, they are ever so much worse than *plain* measles. And she was afraid Silkie would catch them.

Well, poor Cuffy felt more miserable than ever. He saw that his own family didn't know him. And he wondered what was going to become of him. Then, when his father told him very sternly to leave his house at once, Cuffy began to cry.

"Oh! oh! oh!" he sobbed. "It's me—it's only me!" he cried. That very morning, at breakfast, his father had told him to say "It is I," instead of "It is *me*." But Cuffy forgot all about that, now.

"What! Are you my Cuffy?" his father exclaimed. For he knew Cuffy at last. You see, the bees hadn't stung Cuffy's *voice*. And in no time at all Cuffy was tucked into his little bed and his mother was gently licking

his poor, aching face with her tongue. Among bears that is thought to be the very best thing to do for bee-stings.

After a while Cuffy stopped crying. And it was not long before he had fallen asleep.

But it was two days before Cuffy Bear felt really himself again. And then his father went off into the forest with him and Cuffy led the way to the bee-tree; for Mr. Bear knew enough about bees so that he could take their honey away from them without getting stung badly. He didn't mind just a *few* stings, you know.

Well—what do you think happened? When they came to the old tree Mr. Bear took just one look at the nest into which Cuffy had thrust his paw. And then he began to laugh, though he was somewhat disappointed, as you will see.

"Those aren't bees!" he told Cuffy. "That's a hornets' nest!... We'd get no honey there."

XIX

THE LITTLE BEAR PETER

One day late in the summer Cuffy Bear went blackberrying. And on his way home he stopped at the deep pool where the hornets had chased him. He stayed there for a little while to watch the speckled trout as their bright sides flashed out of the depths of the clear water. As Cuffy stood on the big boulder and looked down, he could see himself quite plainly, reflected in the still surface of the water. He waved a paw. And the little bear in the brook waved *his* paw too. Of course Cuffy knew that it was himself he saw. But he pretended for a time that it was some other little bear who was playing with him. And he was having lots of fun.

You see, Mr. Bear's family was the only bear family for miles and miles around. And Cuffy often wished he had other little boy-bears to play with. To be sure, he had his sister, Silkie. But she was a girl, and younger than he was, besides.

Well! Cuffy danced a jig on the top of the big boulder. And the little bear down below danced a jig, too. And Cuffy waved his paw again at the little bear in the water. And once more the little bear in the water waved a paw at *him*. It was great sport. And then Cuffy happened to look up.

To his great surprise, there stood a little bear on the other bank of the brook, right opposite. Cuffy was astonished. The other little bear and the little bear in the brook looked as much alike as two peas. Cuffy had never known that he could see a picture of himself by looking anywhere except into water. It was very strange, he thought. He waved a paw. And the little bear on the other bank waved *his* paw. Cuffy kicked up one of

his hind legs. And the other little bear kicked up, too.

Cuffy was puzzled. Was it really himself he was looking at? He nodded his head. And the other little bear nodded *his* head.

Then Cuffy tried something else. He stared very hard at the little bear opposite him, and called "Hello!"

"Hello, yerself!" the other little bear said. And then Cuffy knew that it was a real, live boy-bear over there, and not just a reflection of himself. Cuffy was so delighted that he jumped down off the boulder and splashed through the brook, he was in such a hurry to get over there where the strange bear stood.

"What's yer name?" the strange bear asked.

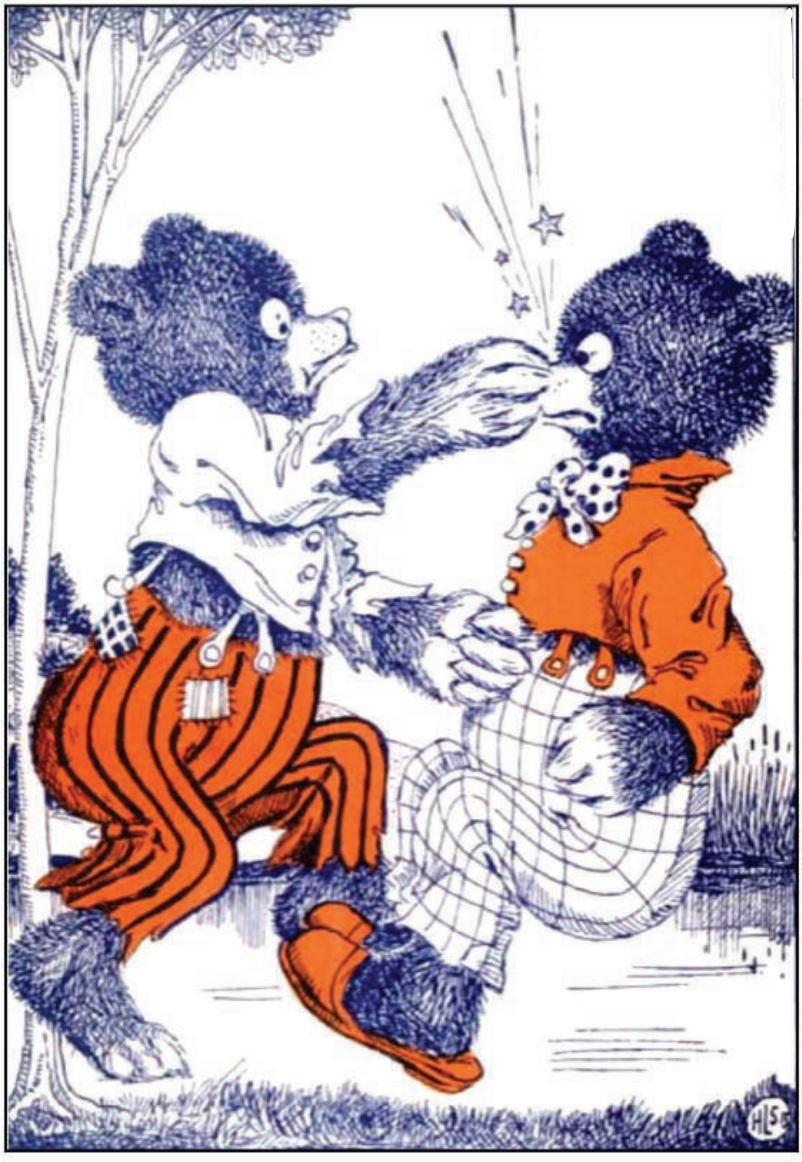
Cuffy told him. And he learned that the strange bear's name was Peter, and that he lived around on the other side of Blue Mountain, as many as ten miles away.

"Aw—call me *Pete*," the new bear said, as Cuffy began to talk to him. "They all calls me Pete." He stuffed his front paws into the pockets of his ragged trousers. "Say, Cuff—what was yer doin' up on that rock?"

"Playing!" Cuffy told him.

Pete gave a grunt. "That's no way ter play," he said. "I'll show yer how ter have fun. Watch me!" He led the way to the bank. And sitting down, he slid and rolled all the way down the steep slope and landed *plump!* in the deep pool.

Now, Cuffy was not going to have Pete think that he couldn't do that, too. Although he was wearing his best trousers that day (for his mother was mending his every-day pair), Cuffy sat down on the top of the bank. And in another moment he had slid and slipped down the bank and landed *ker-splash!* in the water.



Cuffy Received a Slap on His Nose

XX

LEARNING TO BOX

For some time Cuffy Bear and his new friend Pete, as he preferred to be called, continued to slide down the bank of the brook into the water. They became plastered with mud from head to foot. And Cuffy's best trousers had two big holes in them. But Cuffy was having a splendid time.

"Let's box, Cuff!" Pete exclaimed, after a while.

"What's that?" Cuffy asked. He liked to be called "Cuff." Nobody had ever called him by that name before. He felt quite grown up.

"I'll show yer," Pete said. "Stand up in front of me."

Cuffy stood up on his hind legs.

"Now, hold up yer paws—so."

And Cuffy did as he was told.

"Now hit me!" Pete ordered.

And Cuffy struck out at his new friend. But to his surprise he didn't succeed in touching Pete at all. Instead, he received a stinging slap right on the end of his nose.

Cuffy didn't like that. In fact, it made him somewhat angry. And he struck out at Pete once more. But Pete dodged; and he gave Cuffy a good, hard blow in the eye. And while Cuffy was holding onto his poor eye, Pete hit his other eye. And then Cuffy couldn't see a thing, except bright spots that made him think of stars. He tried not to cry. But a few tears *would* go rolling down his cheeks. And he did not like it at all when Pete began to laugh.

"Huh! Don't be a cry-baby!" Pete said. "Yer want ter learn ter box, don't yer?"

"Y-es!" Cuffy answered.

"Well—quit yer cryin' and stand up here, then," Pete commanded.

So once more Cuffy straightened up and held his paws in front of him. And when he thought Pete wasn't watching, Cuffy tried again to hit him. Again Cuffy missed. His paw didn't reach Pete at all. But Pete gave him a terrible poke right in the stomach, and Cuffy sat down quickly on the ground and began to groan.

Pete sat down on the ground too and he looked at Cuffy and grinned.

"Want any more?" he asked.

Cuffy shook his head.

"I'll have to go home now," he said. "Of course, I'd like to box some more; but I haven't time to-day."

"First lesson's over, then," Pete announced. "Come back termorrer and I'll give yer another."

"How long will it be before I learn to box well?" Cuffy inquired.

"You might learn next time," Pete said, "Better try it, anyhow," he advised.

"All right!" Cuffy said. He hoped that another time he would be able to show Pete how it felt to be pounded. "All right—I'll be here at the same time to-morrow."

So Pete trotted off spryly in one direction; and Cuffy trotted off in another, but not quite so spryly, for his head ached and one of his eyes was closed tight.

"Mercy sakes!" Mrs. Bear said, when Cuffy came into the house. "Look at those trousers!"

Cuffy looked at them as well as he could with his one good eye.

"And you're *covered* with mud!" his mother added severely. "What's the matter with your eye?" she demanded.

"I've been having fun—" Cuffy began. "I've been boxing—"

"Fun! Boxing! You've *ruined* your best trousers," she said. "You're a naughty little bear and you're going straight to bed. Who has been playing with you?" she asked.

Mrs. Bear was very much displeased when she learned about Cuffy's new friend. "I know who he is," she said. "His people are very rough. They're not nice bears at all. And I forbid you aver to play with that Peter again."

So Cuffy had to go to bed. And the next day when Pete arrived at the pool he found no Cuffy there. For some time he waited. But still there was no Cuffy.

"Huh!" Pete grunted, as he went away at last. "He's afraid, he is. And it's a good thing for him he didn't come back. If he had, I'd 'a'

fixed him. Yes, sir! I'd—" Whatever it was that Peter would have done to Cuffy, I am sure it wouldn't have been at all pleasant, because the rough little bear Peter scowled frightfully as he trotted off.

XXI

THE FOREST FIRE

It was quite late in the fall. And Blue Mountain looked very different from the way it had looked all summer. The leaves had turned to brown and yellow and scarlet, except where there were clumps of fir-trees, as there were around Mr. Bear's house. Indeed, Blue Mountain looked almost as if it were all aflame, so bright were the autumn colors. Mr. Bear remarked as much to Mrs. Bear one day.

"For goodness' sake, don't say that!" she exclaimed. "Don't mention fire to me. The very thought of it makes me nervous. Everything's *so* dry! I shall be glad when it rains again."

"It *is* dry," Mr. Bear agreed. "But don't worry. It's like this every fall." And he went slowly down the mountain.

Cuffy and Silkie were playing together that morning. Cuffy was teaching Silkie to box, though, to be sure, he knew very little about boxing. But he found it easy to tap Silkie on the nose. And he had tapped her so hard that Mrs. Bear heard a sound very much like quarreling; and she came to the door to see what was the trouble.

Mrs. Bear was just going to call to her children, when she noticed a peculiar odor in the air. And she stood quite still, and sniffed, just as Cuffy had when he smelled the haymakers' lunch. You remember that the more Cuffy sniffed, the less alarmed he had been. But it was different with Mrs. Bear. The longer she stood there, with her nose twitching, and snuffing up the air, the more uneasy she became. And pretty soon she saw something that gave her a great start.

It was something white that Mrs. Bear saw, and it hung over the tree-tops; and where the wind had caught it it was spun out thin, like a veil.

It was exactly what Mrs. Bear had feared—it was smoke! The forest was afire! And Mrs. Bear was very much alarmed. She sent Cuffy and Silkie into the house, because she wanted to be sure that they wouldn't wander off into the woods. And then their mother stood in the doorway and watched. She was looking for Mr. Bear. While she waited there the smoke kept rising more and more until there were great clouds of it; and at last Mrs. Bear could see red flames licking up to the tops of the trees.

Several deer came bounding past, and a great number of rabbits and squirrels. And then followed other animals that couldn't run so fast—such as raccoons, and skunks, and woodchucks. Not for years had Mrs. Bear seen so many of the forest-people—and they were all so frightened, and in such a hurry to get away from the fire, that not one of them

noticed Mrs. Bear as she stood in her doorway.

"Where are they going, Mother?" It was Cuffy who asked the question. He had crept up behind his mother and had been looking at the strange sight for some time.

"They're going over to the lake, on the other side of the mountain," Mrs. Bear said.

"Are they going fishing?" Cuffy inquired.

Mrs. Bear shook her head. And then Cuffy squeezed past her and saw what was happening.

"Oh-h, hurrah! hurrah!" he shouted.

His mother looked at him in astonishment.

"It's father's birthday!" he cried. You remember that Cuffy's mother had told him that Mr. Bear was born on the day of a great forest fire, and that he never had a birthday except when the woods caught fire again.

"Now maybe father will bring home another little pig for a feast!" Cuffy said hopefully.

XXII

THE RAIN COMES

Cuffy Bear was disappointed. For when at last his father came galloping up to his house he brought no pig with him. Indeed he seemed to have forgotten that it was his birthday.

"Get the children!" he shouted to Mrs. Bear, as soon as he came in sight. And pretty soon Cuffy and Silkie and their father and mother were hurrying along on their way to the lake that lay on the other side of the mountain.

Cuffy was delighted. He thought that perhaps he would see the naughty little bear Peter again; for he remembered that Peter lived around the mountain, right where they were going.

They had travelled several miles when Mr. Bear stopped suddenly. And he said, "Hah!" And he looked up at the sky. Something had hit him right in the eye. You might think that Mr. Bear was angry. But no! He was very glad. For it was a drop of rain that had fallen upon him. And in a few minutes there were countless drops pattering down. Yes, soon it was raining hard. And to Cuffy's great disappointment they all started homewards again, for Mr. Bear knew that the rain would soon put the fire out.

Mr. Bear had known all the time that his house wouldn't burn; for it was made of rock, and went straight into the side of the mountain. But he knew that if the woods all around caught fire it would be several days before they could go out and get anything to eat, or even a drink of water. And that was why he had started to lead his family away.

When they were back in their house once more Cuffy could think of only one thing that would make up for his not having seen

the small bear Peter again. And he climbed up on his father's knees and said—

"Will you go and get a little pig, Father?"

"A *pig*?" Mr. Bear exclaimed. "Well, now—why on earth do you want a pig? What would you do with a pig?"

"I'd eat it," Cuffy answered promptly. "It's your birthday, you know. And we ought to have a pig so we can have a real feast."

Mr. Bear smiled. And pretty soon he went out of the house. He was gone a long time. But at last he came back again, fairly staggering beneath the load that he carried.

When Cuffy saw what his father dropped down onto the floor he hopped up and down in his delight. There was no pig there, but Cuffy didn't mind that. For Mr. Bear had brought home four rabbits, and four squirrels, and four porcupines, and four raccoons. And Cuffy ate and ate until his skin grew so tight that he was afraid it would burst. He ate all of one rabbit, and

one squirrel, and one raccoon. But he never touched his porcupine at all. It made him think of the time he had tried to kill a porcupine himself, and had got his paws stuck full of quills. But he had a real feast, just the same.

XXIII

CUFFY BEAR GROWS SLEEPY

Far up Blue Mountain, and down in the valley too, the leaves had long ago fallen off the trees. And for some time the ground had been white with snow; for winter had come again. And Cuffy Bear's sister Silkie had had a birthday-party the very first day it snowed. Cuffy and Silkie shouted with glee each morning now, when they went out of doors, where the earth was covered with a snow-blanket. And they played and played and had just as good a time as little boys and girls have when winter comes. As they scampered about in the door-yard their feet left tracks that looked exactly like the foot-prints of barefooted girls and boys. They played tag,

and hide-and-seek, and turned somersaults. And one day, when Mrs. Bear called them into the house, they ate, each of them, several quarts of chestnuts which Mr. Bear had gathered and brought home. In fact, before Mrs. Bear knew it they had eaten a great many more chestnuts than were good for them. And Cuffy, who had eaten the most, soon began to have a pain in his stomach.

"That's what you get for being greedy," his mother told him.

"I didn't eat many chestnuts," Cuffy said.

Mrs. Bear pointed to the floor.

"What do you call those?" she asked.

"Chestnut-shells," Cuffy replied, hanging his head. There was a great heap of shells on the floor where Cuffy had sat.

"Pick them all up—every one of them," his mother ordered. "And when you have finished you may take a nap—both of you."

Cuffy yawned.

"What do you say?" Mrs. Bear asked severely.

"Excuse me!" Cuffy said hastily.

"That's better!" said Mrs. Bear. "Now do as I say. You'll be asleep before you know it. And I don't intend to have those chestnut shells lying on the floor all winter."

You may think that that was a queer thing for Mrs. Bear to say. But when you see what happened, you'll understand what Mrs. Bear meant.

As Cuffy and Silkie sat down on the floor and began gathering up the chestnut-shells they both yawned and yawned. And since Mrs. Bear had left the room they didn't bother to say "Excuse me!" They were *so* sleepy! And before little Silkie had finished picking up her shells she just rolled herself up into a round ball and fell fast asleep. As for Cuffy, being a little older, he managed to stay awake just long enough to get the floor

all nice and clean. And then *he* rolled himself into a ball and *he* went to sleep, right there on the floor.

So Mrs. Bear found them when she came back into the room. She smiled as she saw them. And picking up first one and then the other she carried them into their little bed-chamber and put them down gently and covered them over with leaves, so they would be snug and warm. Yes, Mrs. Bear wanted her children to be warm, for she knew that they would not wake up again until spring. She had noticed for several days that Cuffy and Silkie were growing sleepy. And to tell the truth, Mrs. Bear was becoming sleepy herself. That very night she and Mr. Bear went to bed a whole hour earlier than usual. And the next day they never minded at all how cold it grew outside or how much the wind howled. For not one of Mr. Bear's family waked up at all! They just slept and slept and slept, the whole winter long.

THE END

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Cuffy Gave It One Good, Hard Cuff

THE SYRUP WAS BOILING HOT

Mrs. Eagle Rose Higher and Higher

The Bees Were Right There Waiting for Cuffy

Cuffy Received a Slap on His Nose

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